WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL

A SHORT HISTORY FOR VISITORS

THIRTY-FIFTH EDITION

PRINTED FOR THE DEAN AND CHAPTER
BY WARREN & SON LIMITED, WINCHESTER

WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL has now been thrown open to visitors free of charge, with the exception of the tower and crypt, for seeing which guidance is necessary and a small charge is made.

Hitherto a fee of sixpence has been charged for admission to the eastern parts of the building. The proceeds from this charge amounted to between £1200 and £1300 annually. These have been devoted entirely to the upkeep of the Cathedral and its services.

It is hoped that the voluntary contributions made by visitors will not fall short of this amount.

WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL is one of the most famous of England's historic buildings. It was the central shrine of Wessex and of the Anglo-Saxon kingdom, and here at Easter Norman kings wore the crown. It is associated also with such great names as those of William of Wykeham, William of Waynflete, and Richard Fox, who endowed education in the country, and with famous regiments, especially The Royal Hampshire Regiment, The King's Royal Rifle Corps, and The Rifle Brigade. Among the monuments are many of great bishops and great soldiers. And the praises of God have been sung on this spot for nearly thirteen hundred years. Architecturally as well as historically the building deserves minute study. But most of all it is a great House of God where all His children are welcomed, to meditate and pray.

The Cathedral is associated with many important events and great persons in English history. Here the earliest kings worshipped and were buried. In the church lie the bones of Egbert (d. 839) the first king of all England ; of Æthelwulf (d. 858) the friend of Saint Swithun and father of Alfred ; of Edred (d. 955) and Canute (b. 994 ? - d. 1035) and Harthacnut (b. 1019 ? - d. 1042) and William Rufus (b. 1060 - d. 1100). Here Edward the Confessor was crowned in 1043. Here Arthur the eldest son of Henry VII was christened in 1486. Here Mary I was married to Philip of Spain in 1554. And almost every English king and prince down to George V in 1912 and Edward Prince of Wales in 1923 have come here to pray.

Among the many monuments[1] are some of great beauty and interest, notably those of Richard Weston Earl of Portland (d. 1635) with a fine bronze effigy by Le Sueur ; Dr. Warton, Head Master of the College (1766 - 1800) with a charming group by Flaxman ; an expressive figure by Chantry of Bishop Brownlow North (1781 - 1820) ; and grave-stones of Izaak Walton (1593 - 1683) and Jane Austen (1775 - 1817). In 1923 English and American admirers erected a wooden statue by Mr. J. N. Comper to the memory of Joan of Arc.

In the year 634 there landed on the coast of Hampshire a mission from Rome headed by a Bishop names Birinus,

[1] See inside of back cover.

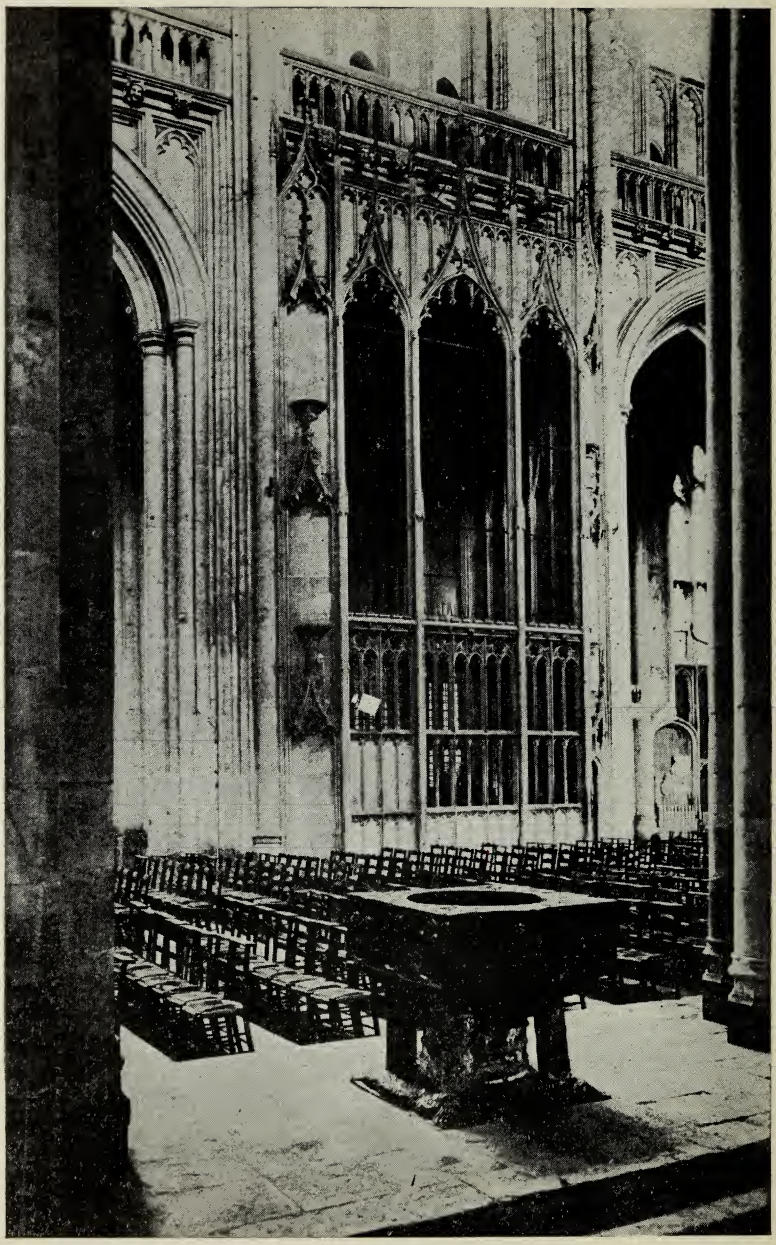
THE NAVE LOOKING EAST (1360 - 1410)

who set about the conversion of the West Saxons. In the next year he baptized Kynegils King of Wessex. Saint Augustine's mission had arrived in Kent thirty-seven years before. In Wales there remained the ancient British Church. In the next year, 635, Aidan entered Northumbria from Scotland. Christianity had surrounded and was closing in upon pagan England.

Birinus first placed his " bishop's stool "—his " cathedra " —at Dorchester in Oxfordshire, but some forty years later, after the death of Birinus, it was removed to Winchester. Here the King built a church in honour of the Holy Trinity and SS. Peter and Paul. It was served by canons though Birinus himself had been a monk. This was the church in which Saint Swithun, dying in 862, thought himself unworthy to be buried. Destroyed by the Danes, it was rebuilt by the reforming bishop Æthelwold and dedicated about 980 at the time of a great revival of church life under Archbishop Dunstan. Æthelwold substituted Benedictine monks for the earlier canons. His new church was therefore a cathedral and a monastic church. It is thought probable that it stood to the north of the present cathedral, which replaced it after it had continued in use for a little more than a century.

The present church[1] was begun in 1079 by Walkelin, the first Norman bishop, a relative of the Conqueror. The eastern part was sufficiently far advanced for the monks to use it by 1093. It was probably finished by Bishop Henry of Blois (d. 1171) brother of King Stephen and builder of Farnham Castle, till 1927 the palace of the bishop. The church was planned on very generous lines. This was an age of great zeal for the monastic life and of great enthusiasm for building, and the Normans had very large ideas. Everything, therefore, conspired to make the churches built immediately after the Conquest remarkable for their size. These have often been altered, but except for some special purpose it has never been necessary to enlarge them. The church at Winchester was the largest except old Saint Paul's—larger than anything that was being built on the Continent. Built partly for the community of monks who lived in the cloister, partly as the church of the bishop of the diocese, partly to

[1] See plan on pages 8 and 9.



12TH CENTURY FONT AND WYKEHAM CHANTRY

contain the relics of departed saints, hardly at all as a diocesan centre and certainly not as a national monument, it was, like the other great Norman churches, the expression of an aspiring and virile race.

Walkelin's church was in the form of a cross, that is with chancel and nave and transepts. In the centre there was one tower and at the west end another with a small transept on either side. In this arrangement of towers as in several other respects Winchester resembles Ely which was built by Abbot Simeon, formerly Prior of Winchester. Walkelin raised his large presbytery on a vaulted basement, which massive and dimly lighted crypt is very impressive in its gloom and mystery. It is as Walkelin left it and shows the original form of the east part of the upper church which has since been rebuilt ; for the plan of the two must, of course, have been the same. Thus we see from the shape of the crypt that Walkelin's great upper church had an apse at the east end ; column and arch sweeping round in a half circle across the end of the church, and behind them a continuous aisle forming an uninterrupted path for processions.

In the centre of the apse stood the high altar ; behind it, almost under the centre arch and raised high on a flight of steps, was the bishop's throne, facing westwards and looking over the altar towards the monks. On either hand lower benches for the clergy circled round. All of which we know by analogy : it was the normal plan in early days and there are remains of the actual stone seats at Norwich and at Ely.

The chancel or quire of the monks was separated from the nave by a high and solid stone screen. (The word chancel means ' screen.') This great screen was called the pulpitum. It consisted of two walls crossing the church and supporting a spacious loft or gallery on which stood the great silver crucifix, bequeathed in 1072 by Archbishop Stigand, with the figures of the Blessed Virgin and Saint John. The nave to the west of this screen formed an almost distinct church for the use of the public and had its own principal and lesser altars, and its own stalls and other furniture. The font of black Tournai marble (*c.* 1180), barbaric but impressive, is sculptured with scenes from the life of Saint Nicholas, the patron saint of children.

SOUTH AISLE LOOKING EAST

The cloister and other monastic buildings were placed on the south side of the church so that they would be sheltered from the north, get all the sunshine and be more secluded from the town. They have almost entirely disappeared, but the house of Prior Simeon, Bishop Walkelin's brother, still stands (though much altered) and is now occupied by the Dean as head of the Chapter.

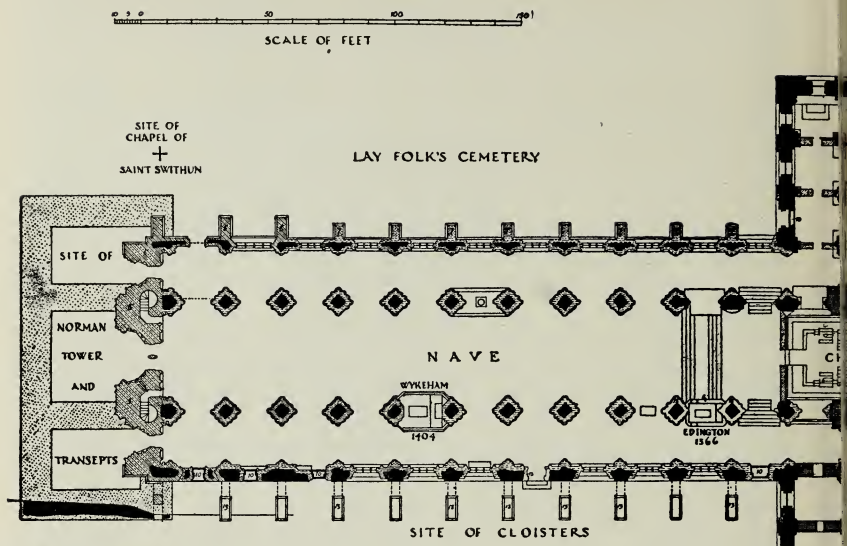
The Norman was not always a good builder—not so good as the Saxon—and there is a story that the great central tower fell fifteen years after its first building. If this was so, it was immediately rebuilt with such slight elevation above the roofs and on piers of such exaggerated massiveness as to suggest some timidity on the part of the builders. The refined masonry and the thin joints of the new work are in marked contrast with the rough work of Walkelin which adjoins it.

When his church was ready to receive them, Walkelin had translated thither the relics of the Blessed Saint Swithun along with those of Saint Birinus and of other early prelates and kings. But the little building at the east end in which the shrine of Saint Swithun stood must have proved quite inadequate to accommodate the crowds of devotees, and it became necessary to enlarge this part.

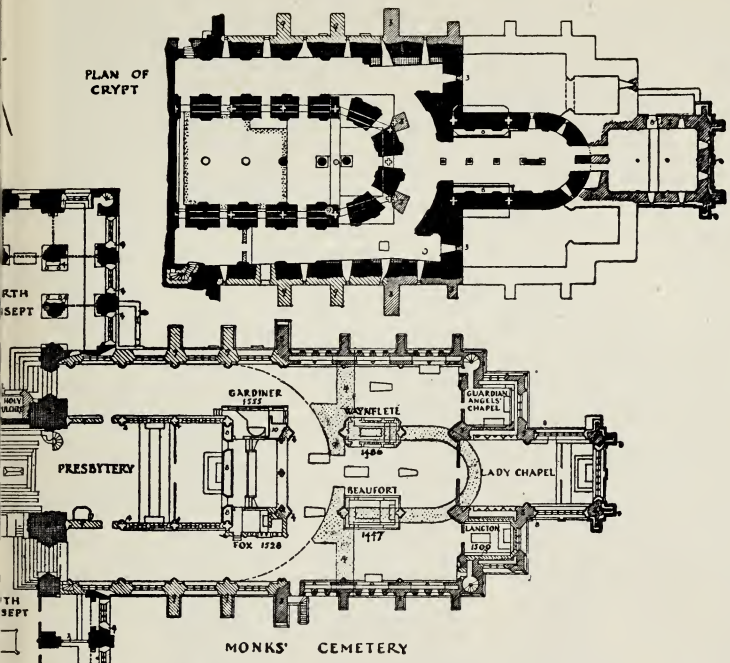
A century after the dedication, therefore, Bishop Godfrey Lucy (1189 - 1204) took down the small Norman chapel at the east end and built what we now call the retro-choir. It consists of a central space with an aisle on either side, all of about equal width and height, with very slender columns giving the greatest possible floor space. The building is ended towards the east by three chapels ; that of our Lady in the middle ; one on the north, called from the paintings on its vault the Guardian Angels Chapel ; and one on the south, probably dedicated in honour of the Blessed Birinus and other saints. Other cathedrals were being enlarged in like manner at this time.

This retro-choir is strikingly different from anything which had yet existed at Winchester. Hitherto all had been, even for Norman work, excessively massive. Only small spaces had been vaulted, and these in the very plainest manner ; windows were round-headed and squat. Lucy's work is

WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL
HISTORICAL PLAN



	Early Norman	Bishop Walkelin (1070–1098) Crypt and east part of upper church (probably including east part of Nave)	1079–1093
2	Later Norman	Tower and supporting piers as rebuilt after the fall in 1107, and completion of Nave	1107–c. 1170
3	Earliest Gothic	Bishops Godfrey de Lucy (1189–1204) and Peter des Roches or de Rupibus (1205–1238). Retro-choir and eastern chapels. Sepulchre chapel. Paintings in Guardian angels and in Sepulchre chapels	1189–1233
4	Mid-Gothic	Presbytery arcades. Choir stalls	1300–1360
5	Mid-Gothic	Bishop William Edington (1346–1366). Probable completion of west end of Presbytery. Rebuilding of west end of Nave and refacing of west parts of north and south aisles	1355–1394
7	Norman work altered	Bishops William of Wykeham (1367–1404), Henry Beaufort (1404–1447), and William of Waynflete (1447–1486). Transformation of Nave and Aisles and construction of vaults. Chapel of William of Wykeham	1394–1450



8	Late Gothic	Priors Thomas Hunton (1470–1498) and Thomas Silkstede (1498–1524). Chapels of Beaufort and Waynflete. Windows and vault and screen of Lady Chapel. Great Screen or Reredos. Pulpit	1450–1500
9	Gothic with some Renaissance ornament	Bishops Thomas Langton (1493–1500) and Richard Fox (1500–1528). South-east chapels. Outer walls of Presbytery. Vaults of Presbytery and aisles. Presbytery screens. Fox's chapel	1500–1525
10	Mixed Gothic and Renaissance	Bishop Stephen Gardiner (1531–1555) and others. Chapel of Gardiner. Vault of tower	1540–1640
11	Doubtful age		
12	Work destroyed		
13	Modern	South buttresses of Nave, &c.	1907–1912
14	Norman	Extent of original church	

SOUTH PRESBYTERY AISLE AND RETRO-CHOIR CHAPEL

remarkable for its lightness and elegance. Walkelin's work had relied on inert weight ; Lucy's is a system of balanced forces : the Romanesque and Gothic systems of construction are here brought into sharp contrast.

As time went on great men chose this spot as their resting-place, and in particular four noteworthy chantry chapels commemorate four noteworthy bishops : Cardinal Henry Beaufort (1404 - 1447) the great statesman of the troubled times of Henry VI, and William of Waynflete (1447 - 1486) the founder of Magdalen College, Oxford, on either side of Saint Swithun ; and near by, Richard Fox (1501 - 1528) founder of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, and Stephen Gardiner (1531 - 1555) who married Queen Mary I to Philip II of Spain in the cathedral. Lucy's grave is marked by a very simple slab in the middle of his own romantic building before the entrance to the Lady Chapel.

The eastern chapels were altered in the fifteenth century. New windows were made and new vaults in the Lady Chapel and Langton's Chapel, new screens and stalls were also made for these chapels. These changes will be more particularly described presently.

* * * * * *

Let us try for a moment to accompany a pilgrim visiting the shrine of Saint Swithun in the last years before the Reformation.

Entering the north transept by the door now blocked but visible outside, he beheld fair white walls and paintings and storied windows and altars seen through fretted screens. He would turn first—we can almost trace his steps—to the left, towards the north end of the transept, to place a taper before the painting which was there of Saint Christopher through whose intercession he had won through the dangers of his journey ; and then to his right to look at the exquisite little chapel of the Holy Sepulchre with its admirable and forceful paintings done shortly after Bishop Lucy's time. Then he would ascend a noble flight of steps and pass through a gate-way canopied over by a wide spreading wooden vault, traceried and coloured, of which we can still see the imprint on the piers on either side. Passing along the aisle he would see,

through the screen which Bishop Fox had put up in 1525, the wonders of the high altar and of the great reredos behind it with its figures richly coloured and gilt ; and on the top of Fox's screens the coffers containing the bones of ancient kings and bishops ; and further on to the place of the shrines. The floor, not then broken and dim, glowed with red and gold : (a single tile bears the legend ' Have mynde ') : the light from the lancet windows was softened by coloured glass : the marble panels under them were painted with patterns, the vault above with angels. And in the very middle the shrine of Saint Swithun.

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This digression has broken the chronological treatment of the cathedral history and we must return to the fourteenth century.

The third great building period at Winchester begins about 1315. The work then started consisted of the gradual re-modelling of the Norman church and it continued with little interruption for the next hundred years.

The first thing to be dealt with was the presbytery. This was rebuilt gradually (1315 - 1360), the work being begun at the east and continued westwards somewhat roughly. The vault, the outer walls, and the stone screens between the Purbeck marble columns, were built at a later time, as will be related below. To this period belong the beautiful stone screens in the south transept.

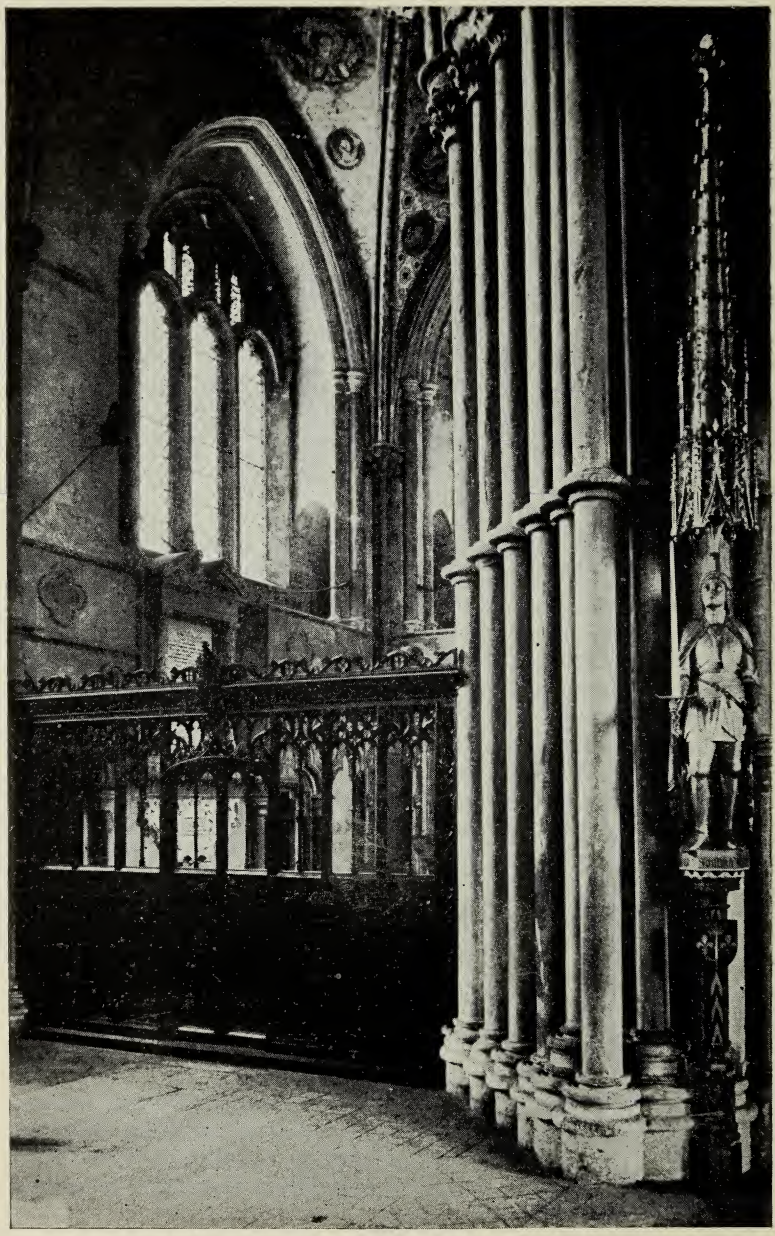
A little before the rebuilding of the presbytery new stalls had been made for the monks. These are a very good example of Gothic woodwork. The figure carving is full of life and interest ; it shows how the medieval workman lavished (one might say wasted) his labour, for two tiny heads under the misericordes have tongues made to move. The stalls were much repaired in the latter part of the seventeenth century and were stained a dark brown.

The remodelling of the nave is the most famous episode in the history of the cathedral. It is associated with the names of two men : Bishops William Edington (1346-1366) and William of Wykeham (1367-1404). Edington rebuilt the

west front in a rather ugly manner and altered the western bays of the north and south aisles. His modest chantry chapel is on the south side of the dais. Wykeham became Bishop in 1367. He was busy with the foundations of his Colleges at Winchester and Oxford till 1394 but he then began at his own cost the work at the Cathedral. By chiselling the surface of the ancient Norman columns or refacing them with new stones he gave them a new form. He greatly increased their height by obliterating the triforium gallery. He rebuilt the aisle vaults at a higher level and made new windows. Finally he threw across the nave a splendid stone vault in place of the flat wooden ceiling. By this process he transformed the church bay by bay without actually taking it down and rebuilding it and without taking off the roof. Indeed nothing that was out of sight was altered, and in the large and well-lighted space above the vault some untouched Norman features may still be seen.

What Wykeham accomplished may be realized by a glance at the rude and low Norman columns in the eastern part of the nave preserved from alteration because the pulpitum abutted against them. He destroyed a nave no better than those of Ely and Norwich and far inferior to Durham and he gave us what is probably the finest nave in the country. If his work is not very refined, it is bold, masculine, unaffected, and of noble proportions. It must not be supposed that in these qualities it necessarily mirrors the mind of the great Chancellor. Though somewhat advanced, the character of the work is rather that of the time and is shared by buildings with which Wykeham had nothing to do. But we may probably give him credit for at least a share in evolving the method of procedure. A lofty chapel marks the place of his burial on a spot which the great man had chosen because he had there been accustomed as a boy to hear mass at the altar of our Lady. There may you see his effigy cut in alabaster ; three monks at his feet raise their hands in prayer ; at his head angels smooth his pillow.

After the completion of the nave several important works, some of which have been already mentioned, were done at the eastern part of the church. Priors Hunton (1470 - 1498) and Silkstede (1498 - 1524) made large traceried windows



GUARDIAN ANGEL CHAPEL AND STATUE OF SAINT JOAN

and a rich and beautiful vault over the Lady Chapel. The screen and rood loft, made at the same time, were without question coloured and gilded as brightly as the new statue of Joan of Arc now is. The walls were painted with some of the legendary history of our Lady. In making his chantry chapel Thomas Langton (1493 - 1501) did similar work in the south-east chapel. The vault is excellent and the woodwork particularly exquisite, with a slight mixture of the Italian Renaissance which was just beginning to be felt in England.

The great stone screen or reredos at the back of the high altar was made in the latter part of the fifteenth century. The figures are modern. The richly-decorated wood vaulting of the presbytery was added at the beginning of the sixteenth century. The bosses are carved with the instruments of the Passion and with heraldry ; the arms of Prince Arthur the eldest son of Henry VII impaled with those of Katherine of Aragon probably fix the date as 1501-2. The stone screens built by Bishop Fox between the columns are dated 1525, and the chests on the top containing the relics of early kings and bishops were made at the same time. The rebuilding of the outer walls of the presbytery aisles was done about 1528. The choir pulpit, but not its sounding board, which is modern, was the gift of Prior Silkstede (1498 - 1524). The quaint rebuses of Priors Silkstede and Hunton and of Bishop Langton may be seen on their works.

At the time of the Reformation the shrines, side altars, and a great number of other works of art were destroyed. But some very good work was done in the reign of Charles I when Laud as Archbishop of Canterbury was endeavouring to repair some of the havoc wrought by the more fanatical party of the preceding hundred years. About 1635 a fine stone screen of Roman design by Inigo Jones took the place of the old pulpitum between the nave and choir. The bronze statues of James I and Charles I by Le Sueur now at the west end of the nave formerly stood against this screen. The wood vaulting over the choir (the tower) was done at the same time, and a large wooden reredos with an overhanging canopy was put up in front of the great stone reredos which had been deprived of its sculpture. Inigo Jones's choir screen and the wooden reredos have been removed, though some parts have been preserved.

The present Communion rails were made at the end of the seventeenth century; they are probably one of the many benefactions of Bishop Morley (1662 - 1684). A new throne was made for Bishop Tomline, 1820. The organ is by Willis, 1851.

Recent works have been chiefly for the repair and preservation of the fabric, such as the repair of the roofs and notably the underpinning of a large part of the building and the addition of the south buttresses. The romantic story of the underpinning by Sir Thomas Jackson and Sir Francis Fox between the years 1905 and 1912 at a cost of £113,000 will be remembered by many. Quite suddenly the retro-choir and then other parts had shown signs of collapse. It was found that the wooden piles which had been driven into the peaty subsoil as a foundation had given way. A new foundation had to be formed, but a firm bottom was only found below the water level. The work had therefore to be done by a diver who dug away the ground below the walls and placed in position sacks filled with concrete which were lowered down to him through the water. While this laborious work was in progress a large part of the building was surrounded by great masses of timber shoring. Since then no movement has taken place, and we may feel fairly confident that the building is safe for many generations to come.

PRINCIPAL MONUMENTS.

Nave and Aisles.

North Side ... Rifle Brigade Monuments and Roll of Honour.
Miss Austen, 1775 - 1817.
Bishop Hoadly, 1676 - 1761.

South Side ... Roll of Honour of Hampshire Men.
Dr. Warton, 1722 - 1800.
The King's Royal Rifle Corps Monuments and Roll of Honour.
Bishop William of Wykeham, 1324 - 1404.
Bishop Willis, 1664 - 1734.
Bishop Edward Harold Browne, 1811-1891.
Bishop William Edington, d. 1366.

North Transept.

General Sir Redvers Buller, 1839 - 1908.

South Transept.

Bishop Samuel Wilberforce, 1805 - 1873.
Izaak Walton (in Virgers' Vestry), 1593-1683.

Choir.

William Rufus (reputed), 1060 - 1100.

Presbytery.

North Aisle... Bishop Gardiner, 1497 ? - 1555.
South Aisle... Bishop Fox, 1448 ? - 1528.

Retro-Choir.

North Side ... Bishop Sumner, 1790 - 1874.
Bishop Waynflete, 1395 ? - 1486.
Bishop Peter des Roches, d. 1238.
Bishop Brownlow North, 1741 - 1820.
Bishop Aymer de Valence, d. 1260.
Sir Arnald de Gaveston, d. 1302.

Centre ... Site of Saint Swithun's Shrine.
Bishop Godfrey de Lucy, d. 1204.

South Side ... Prior William Basing, d. 1295.
Cardinal Beaufort, d. 1447.
Sir John Clobery, 1624 - 1687.

Guardian Angels' Chapel.

Earl of Portland, d. 1635.

Langton's Chapel.

Bishop Thomas Langton, d. 1501.

APPROXIMATE DATES

OF DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE CATHEDRAL.

Norman church by Walkelin	1079-1095
„ „ finished	1170
Retro-choir and eastern chapels by Godfrey de Lucy	1200
Retro-choir tile pavement	1300
„ „ niches at west end ..	1320
Chapel of the Holy Sepulchre	1200
„ „ „ „ paintings	1225
Choir stalls	1308
Presbytery	1315-1360
West end rebuilt by Edington ..	1360
Edington chapel	1366
Nave remodelled by Edington and Wykeham	1360-1410
Beaufort chapel	1447
Waynflete chapel	1486
Eastern chapels altered	1475-1500
Presbytery reredos	1475
„ vault	1502
„ pulpit	1520
„ screens by Fox	1525
„ aisles rebuilt	1528
Fox chapel	1528
Gardiner chapel	1555
Statues of James I and Charles I ..	1635
Altar rails	1665